

## Jodi McKay

Minister for Tourism  
Minister for the Hunter  
Minister for Science and Medical Research  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)



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### **Hunter researcher granted funds for cutting edge stroke research**

Hunter based Professor Chris Levi's research into the effects of stroke has been given a boost today with the announcement of \$230,275 to advance the *China – Australia Therapeutic Hypothermia in Stroke* research program.

Minister for Science and Medical Research and Minister for the Hunter Jodi McKay said the grant is part of the NSW Government's *China-NSW Collaborative Research Program*, targeting research that combines traditional Chinese medicine and modern approaches to treat medical conditions such as cancer, heart disease and brain injuries.

Ms McKay said Associate Professor Chris Levi from John Hunter Hospital and the University of Newcastle is leading the *China – Australia Therapeutic Hypothermia in Stroke* research program.

"The number and quality of applications for funding through this program was outstanding, confirming NSW's position as Australia's leading research State and indicating the high quality of Professor Levi's submission," Ms McKay said.

Professor Levi said his team are working in collaboration with a team from Harbin Medical University in Northern China on techniques to cool the brains of stroke patients, and subsequently rewarm them after 24 hours.

The Newcastle team is investigating intravascular technology that cools the blood through the whole body. At Harbin Medical University, researchers are focusing on evaluating the effectiveness of a cooling helmet to treat the brain locally.

"Cooling the brain is the most promising of all the treatments to help protect brain tissue from damage caused by stroke; however some patients are susceptible to complications during rewarming," Professor Levi said.

"If we can identify protein markers in the blood of those patients who require different rewarming treatment and timing it may be possible to avoid this complication with a simple blood test.

"This funding will go towards the development of a diagnostic kit to test the blood of stroke patients and ensure they receive the treatment that is most appropriate to their needs."

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Research is being undertaken through the Hunter Medical Research Institute's (HMRI) Stroke Research Group, and is also supported by grants from the National Heart Foundation, the Australian Brain Foundation and HMRI.

Ms McKay said two other projects also received funding under the first round of the program, targeting cancer and heart disease.

Ms McKay said NSW and China have world class scientific expertise and research facilities.

"By working together and combining ideas and resources, scientists will be able to further their research in ways they could not have achieved otherwise."

Ms McKay said the NSW and Chinese Governments committed to supporting the cooperative research program as part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by both parties in March this year.

"The signing of the MoU and the establishment of the *China-NSW Collaborative Research Program* are important steps in continuing the long-standing relationship between New South Wales and China," Ms McKay said.

"The NSW Government looks forward to the results of these cutting edge research projects and ongoing collaboration with our Chinese partners."

The *China-NSW Collaborative Research Program* is supported by the NSW Office for Science and Medical Research and China's Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

### **China-NSW Collaborative Research Program funding recipients:**

#### **China-NSW Cancer Genesis, Spread and Treatment Proteomic Discovery Program**

- Professor Mark Baker (Macquarie University) and Professor Fuchu He (Beijing Proteome Research Centre)

#### **Efficacy Biomarkers for Traditional Therapy in Myocardial Angina Pectoris (coronary diseases)**

- Dr Stuart Cordwell (University of Sydney) and A/Professor Jin Cao (Xiyuan Hospital, China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, Beijing)

#### **China-Australia Therapeutic Hypothermia in Stroke Research Program**

- A/Professor Chris Levi (University of Newcastle and John Hunter Hospital) and Professor Chuanlu Jiang (Harbin Medical University)